



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Sentencing of Human Rights Defender Yevgeniy Zhovtis in Kazakhstan

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Carol Fuller
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 10, 2009

Madam Chair,

The United States Government would like to add its voice to those of Kazakhstani and international human rights non-governmental organizations that have expressed concern about the fairness of the judicial proceedings in the case of Yevgeniy Zhovtis, one of Kazakhstan's leading defenders of human rights. Notwithstanding a number of procedural irregularities and an apparent lack of due process, Zhovtis was sentenced September 3 to four years' imprisonment for the Kazakhstani equivalent of vehicular manslaughter.

We urge Kazakhstan to provide Mr. Zhovtis access to fair legal proceedings during the appeals process, consistent with Kazakhstani law and its commitment to international standards on the rule of law. We further urge Kazakhstan to conduct these proceedings with full transparency and to investigate alleged irregularities. The outcome of this trial is being watched closely by the international community as Kazakhstan prepares to take over the chairmanship of the OSCE.

Thank you, Madam Chair.